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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 001059

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: CZECH RESPONSE TO JULY 18 GAERC DEMARCHE

REF: STATE 12486

Classified By: Classified by CDA Mike Dodman for reasons 1.4 B and D

1. (C) On July 14 we delivered reftel demarche to Mr. Petr Kaiser, the new Director of the Common Foreign and Security Policy Department at the Czech MFA. Kaiser offered the following views on items that will be on the agenda of the July 18-19 GAERC meeting:

A. Turkey: Kaiser was reluctant to discuss Turkey, terming it an issue in the competence of his colleagues dealing with internal EU matters. We explained USG view that Turkish accession has an important strategic element and reiterated reftel point that we hoped negotiations would begin in October, assuming preconditions are met.

B. Uzbekistan: Kaiser noted, without elaboration, that there is frustration within the EU over current efforts to promote reform in Belarus, and he thought this was shaping the EU position on Uzbekistan. He said the Czechs support an international inquiry of events in Andijon as the starting point for developing any policy. He suggested an international organization would be best to conduct this review, with the OSCE the most likely candidate. Recalling the discussion EU Political Directors had with A/S Fried at the previous day's lunch, Kaiser suggested Uzbekistan was a good candidate for practical US-EU foreign policy cooperation. In terms of the GAERC discussion, Kaiser could not predict where EU Foreign Ministers would end up, noting only the need to strike a "critical balance" between maintaining contact with Uzbekistan and upholding principles.

C. Syria and Lebanon: Kaiser indicated that the Council's draft conclusions call for full implementation of UNSCR 1559, and that the Czech government strongly supports this position.

D. China arms embargo: With Kaiser, and in discussion the same day with the MFA Political Director, Martin Povejsil, we emphasized continued sensitivity of China arms embargo, drawing attention to pending US legislation that could impose sanctions on entities selling arms to China. Kaiser did not expect any GAERC decision on China. Both Kaiser and Povejsil stressed no change in Czech policy: an eventual lifting of the embargo depended on an effective strategic dialogue with EU partners, including the US, and expressed confidence that the toolbox and Code of Conduct would be more effective than the current embargo. Kaiser stressed that Czech policy would continue to prohibit the export of any material to China that might be used for repression (e.g. guns), or any advanced technology or other goods that could increase or advance China's capabilities; he noted their position is similar to the UK's. (Note: past discussions at the Czech MFA have also stressed the need for Chinese human rights improvement as a prerequisite for lifting the embargo; omission from these discussions was likely an oversight, but we will follow-up.)

DODMAN